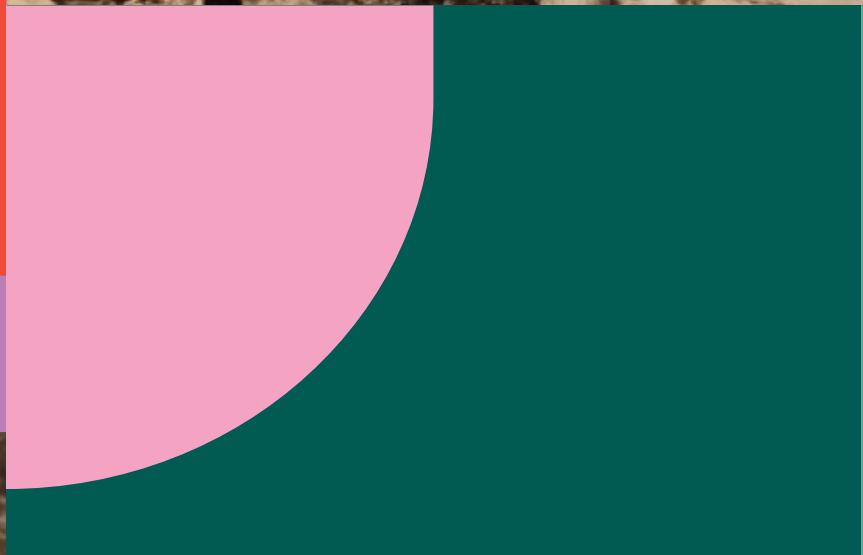


Tragic Love

Poetry Undressed



The Rose Garden Cornucopia

Cosette de Lorenzo

Grace Muir

02 • 2022

The Rose Garden

4

New Chopsticks:
Seven Years of
Spiky Hearted
Love

8

Crocheting in
Black

9

Love Songs
for
Cannibals

6

Cornucopia

Distance

10

11

Your Embrace

14

Love
Sandwich

Contents

22

**A Valentine's
Day Letter To
My Bearded
Dragon (And
My Best
Friend)**

24

Mind as Well

20

**Like a
Car
Crash**

15

The Kiss

16

This Moment

19

**Ashes
to
Ashes**

The Rose Garden Cosette de Lorenzo

The air is a still static, a limp blanket that smothers us and
I draw in ragged gasps, oxygen slithering down the back of my throat, scaly serpent that worms its
way into my lungs.

He seems so light and I think maybe I am the only one who has noticed.

We grasp at the tangled blossoms within the garden, wrenching them from the damp earth but
They're all thorn, the scarlet we thought we saw is dribbling from my ragged wounds,
A thick, crimson sludge that makes my stomach churn.

The moonlight falls softly and the beauty of it all makes me giddy,
fills my head with air and I tell him I love him and he punches me in the gut,
knuckle dusters,

tears a gaping hole in my middle and yanks out my insides,
Lays my entrails on the ruptured earth beneath our feet.

How can a smile be so cold?

The moon, once beautiful, now unforgiving in its glare.

I surrender in an embarrassing display of extremities.

Never halves.

Lie spread eagle in the dirt

Uncompartmentalised rubble of broken promises and unspoken words, an imagined life I thought was
mine but now I flounder as it fizzles and fades, dissolves into the relentless heat of the summer night.

Am I my own? An imitation of the things I once cherished?

Carbon copy, fraud, disfigured shadow of darkness,

Extracting a certain pleasure from the knowledge that

These disjointed puzzle pieces fit nowhere and he will never see the glorious picture.

No.

All he owns is a toothless smile and some secrets, and

When I speak he hears noise, meanings plunging off jagged cliffs into the evil depths of the
salty sea,

A thousand teeth torn straight from the fleshy gums, I charge at him with pliers and pull.

The garden smells too sweet and that's when we notice the putrid corpse, a gnarled finger emerging from the soil, pointing, accusing, you did this to me.
His stare is a dagger and I brandish my own, a showdown,
Click, click
Finger stuttering on the trigger.
The fun of the game.

The barrel of his gun lies cool at my temple and now I know I'm next.
Death excites him and I confess the sting is so damn intoxicating.
Delicious pain that buzzes its way through my veins, an addictive anticipation, I live only for my own
demise.

I want to hold it in my hands, to prod and poke, to understand the murals of the tortured artist in the clouds,
as he looks down and laughs.

A hollow cackle echoes through my skull, goddamn wasp in my brain.
It begs for freedom and he grants it,
Delivers blow after wretched blow until the bone is nothing but a million fractured pieces glittering on
the ground, a horrific mosaic among the dirt.
Buried between the roses.

Why does he stop there?
I crave the dull ache, the excruciating agony of desire.
Give it to me,
 fucking KILL me with it you sick sadist!
My scream splits the air with an ugly, feral rip
 and in return a guttural moan.
We fall among the roses, an awful, stunted waltz, a ragged stop, start
 The dance of the dead.

Mangled limbs,
where do I start, where do I end?
Soil cakes my fingers, chokes my pleas
And I barely see as he wanders away,
Whistles a pretty love song
That I think I may have heard before.
It doesn't matter so much anymore
now that I am alone.
Looking up at all these sickening

Cornucopia

Grace

Muir

Hummingbirds roost within my ribcage;
Nectarines and raspberries rattle inside my lungs.
A tender forest bursting with life just below my surface.
I tremble from the frequency of its humming
While woodpeckers chip away at the inside of my bones.
Shrieking and begging.
Begging to be witnessed, begging to be heard;
The ache is sharp and undeniable.
One day they will break through their enclosure and sing out

i love you, i love you, i love you.

off-key and ill-practiced,
But so very proud.

Their wings brush against my inflamed throat until I gag;
Nausea's taste is the sweetness of hot chocolate and stolen spoons of honey.
I am sick with it, I am sick with the sweetness and singing and begging and chipping.
Immobilized by fear and fever, the only thing to do
Is fold into myself.
Try to hold my hollow bones together with raw fingertips and determination.

I am certain I will crack one day, I will crack and you will remain whole and sturdy
Standing above me, front row seat to the splitting of my sternum.
An eruption of colour and feathers to entertain,
I hope at the very least you find some laughter in my secret garden.
Please, pay no mind to my crumpled frame at your feet;
The husk of my being, your basket of gifts and sweet things.
Turn your gaze to the sky.
Watch my birds soar while I cannot.
Take the fruit and honey from my torn seams
And gorge yourself on what I could never delight in.
Devour me.

When you tell your friends of this display, be gentle;
Speak of me softly, as if I deserved more.
Tell them not of my painfully eager hummingbirds,

They do not need to know of my romantical illusions or how foolish I have been.
Instead, tell them about the colours contained within a hopeful young woman.
Tell them how she grew a forest within herself
To fill you, to thank you,
So that you may carry a piece of her and think of her kindly.
Delusional as she may be, you were never starved by her hands.
Fill your friends with the same wonder she contained
Before the begging won and it made its grand escape.

Until then,
The day my strength gives out and my body betrays at last,
Pretend you do not hear the beating of wings reverberating through my shallow depths.
Slip into the comfortable half silence,
We can say we are hollow though we both hear their muffled pleas.
My ecosystem will continue to grow while you wait for the day
I erupt and become your cornucopia.
Free to pick at, nourishing your pride with my honeyed insides.
Feast on my sugary embarrassment.

Take it all, it is yours, it is meant for you.
Take all of me.

Grace Muir is a
first year English/creative-
writing student studying at the Uni-
versity of Guelph. She has a passion for
creation and storytelling across multiple me-
diuns, but poetry has always had a very special
place in her heart. Going forward, Grace is excited
to keep evolving and developing her voice and style,
she hopes to share her stories with as many people as
are willing to listen.

New Chopsticks: Seven Years of Spiky Hearted Love

Esther Maloney

Seven years ago, we showed up at a dear friends home, tea in hand and spoke the Baha'i marriage vow in their backyard: "we will all verily abide by the Will of God."

These few words are apparently messier, more dynamic than a younger me thought. Anniversaries have my mind travelling both forwards and backwards in time.

Backwards to the night we met, you: a semi-bearded man in a green hoodie with a phenomenally dry sense of humour, a desire in his heart to work with youth, and a hole in the bottom of the car you offered to drive me home in.

Me, at a cynical and broken-hearted moment in my life, where I actually said to you "you have a car? I thought you said you were a musician."

And in that eight-minute car trip, you asked me, point-blank, what the biggest shift of my life had been so far.

"I'm about to turn 30 and I've just gotten divorced. That's not how I thought this whole thing would go. You?" I asked casually.

"Same" was all you said, looking at the cold dark night ahead of you in the windshield.

A pause. And then we laughed, our eyes a bit shiny.

You and I, the kind of people who had been so deeply hurt by love, who had so thoroughly misunderstood marriage, that we laughed at the mere thought of ever attempting such a thing again. We've been two spiky-hearted, terrified people at times, hiding the way we so desperately long to trust, to be seen and to truly hold one another in this fortress.

We've been learning about being true helpmates to one another.

I'm grateful for a marriage that sees itself as a place from which to serve others and build community.

I'm grateful for a marriage that is open to continually asking questions about what is 'normal' and expected in our society and what is actually most nourishing and generative for our own family.

Yesterday, while our five-year-old kid was going wild at the table, I announced that my one, beloved pair of wooden chopsticks were done, as they disintegrated into my food.

"If you can wait ten minutes to eat, I'll go and axe you some new chopsticks on the balcony," you said.

This is so quintessentially you.

You of the green eyes and leather folio.

You of the candy-red Mustang you taught me to drive stick on.

You of those night arguments.

Of the hyper-organized dishwasher load.

You always coming back again to heal, and wrench open these terrified heart rooms.

May you always continue to be this man I adore, exclaiming that tea is the cornerstone of society, and always eager to get outside and build something new, or just "axe me some new chopsticks."

Crocheting In Black

Heather Meatherall

my mother always says
you can judge how much someone loves you
by what colour they crochet in
specifically
if they crochet in black

cause if they crochet in black
that means they love you a lot
are will to struggle through miscounting their stitches
and losing their place in the pattern
it means they will take just as much
time and care
with you

so when I gift you
a handmade black scarf
it is my way of saying
I love you

I love you so much
that I will take all the time it will take
to get it right
I will be patient and careful
and I may mess up
and I will certainly swear
but that will not stop me

because if I am willing
to crochet in black for you
then everything else
that comes with loving you
will be easy

Distance

Alexander Russell

Europe

North America Ireland Canada

The vast expanse of blue emptiness in between,
With nothing but a screen to bridge the gap,
The gap doesn't matter; It'll be closed someday

Soon,
There will be a plane ride
Across North America
The UK
And into Europe
The waiting will be done

There was pain at the end last time
But also a promise, a pledge of better days to come
Before stepping out into the cold
With bittersweet tears

Though there is great distance
As of now
We make do with
The convenience of technology
Allowing us to communicate
Though it does not replace
Being in the same room

The days feel like they're getting shorter
The time feels fleeting
But the wait feels like forever
So near, and yet so far

Yet within months
There will be no distance at all

Your Embrace

Hera

Your embrace is like
musical notes on a page.
When they are played,
they come to life,
and so are the feelings
i feel for you.

Your embrace is like
a painting. It feels
relaxing and freeing,
a safe place to be me.
That is what you
have given me.

Your embrace is like
a plant growing.
It starts off small,
but later soars into
the beauty I see
before me now.

Your embrace is like
a hot chocolate on
a rainy day. It brings me
comfort and joy. But it is
only a pleasure I indulge in,
every once in a while.

Your embrace is like
pomegranate on a
summer evening.
Unusual but somehow
fits perfectly, like a
puzzle piece.



Love Songs For Cannibals

I love you, as certain dark things are to be loved.

- Pablo Neruda

I wanna fuck you like an animal.

- Trent Reznor

I.

This is a love poem
For bored necrophiliacs
Skulking in graveyards.

May my words warm you tonight
Like a ghoul's loving embrace.

II.

Let us stitch ourselves
Into a single being
Torsos intertwined.

A marriage of sutured flesh
Bound together forever.

III.

Let me roast your heart
Over smoldering embers
Of fragrant rosewood.

Perhaps then you'll feel the warmth
I've always felt toward you.

Monsieur Pain

IV.

Your bloody tampons
Taste like copper tangerines
Warm upon my tongue.

Ravenous, I feast on them,
Mouth dripping with your liquids.

V.

If you died today,
I would eat your corpse
Raw and still bleeding.

Do not leave me with my grief,
For without you, I will starve.

VI.

I'll pull out my teeth
And string them all together
Into a necklace.

Please, wear them around your neck,
The day you leave me behind.

VII.

Meet me in the woods,
Bring your knives and your needles,
There, we'll bleed ourselves,

And mark the forest crimson
When we make love on the leaves.

I'll pull out my teeth
And string them all together
Into a necklace.

Please, wear them around your neck,
The day you leave me behind.

VII.

Meet me in the woods,
Bring your knives and your needles,
There, we'll bleed ourselves,

And mark the forest crimson
When we make love on the leaves.

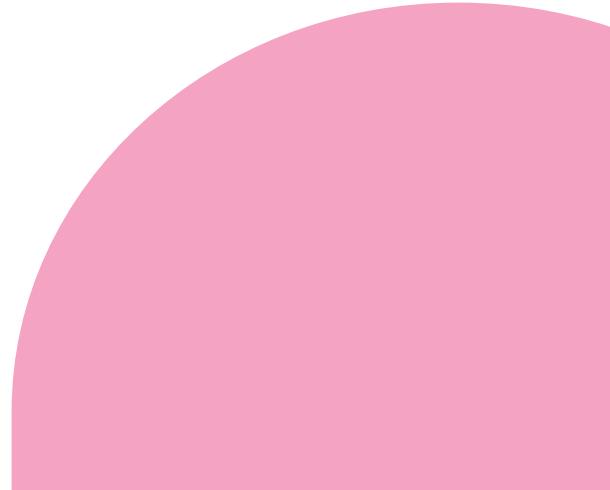
Love Sandwich

Massiel Alfonso

Your arms
Are the only arms
I, wish to dive in
like waves
Your arms
Are the safest place
Safest space
I've landed on
Since we made love
on the moon.
Your lips,
I wish
To live in
For the end of time
And when that time
Runs out
Like sand on my nightstand
I wish
To dig my way out
And love you some more.

Your eyes
Are the perfect shade
of love
And chocolates
And love
And
Chocolates
Love is chocolates
Sweet
Like me
And you
Inside
Beehives
Honey
Like honey,
When are you coming home?
Like, honey,
I need you
To stick to me
The way our lips stick
When we kiss
With honey
Hanging from our lips,
Honey, I've missed you
Honey the Sky's blue
Honey

this place called your home
I wish to lay in
and make picnics with
Love sandwiches
With our bodies
I wish to lay with you
Honey,
I've been waiting for your love forever,
And I think it's time
We're right on time,
It's forever now,
your lips
Are waiting for me, now.
I wish the world would stop
And we would be free
To wander
Like the birds in
Love trees
Like the birds
In our love nest
Watch them tweet-tweet
There way to freedom.
Your eyes,
They're yelling for me to come home
And love you once more,
The way we do when were alone,
We make shit sweet
Like honey,
And I can wait to be a bee
inside your beehive.



The Kiss

Anastasia Michailoglu

ΤΟ ΦΙΛΙ

Του Έρωτα και της Ψυχής
μαύρο μονοπάτι
με βάσανα
στρωμένο
όνειρο μαύρο
του Μορφέα

βρίσκει γιατρειά

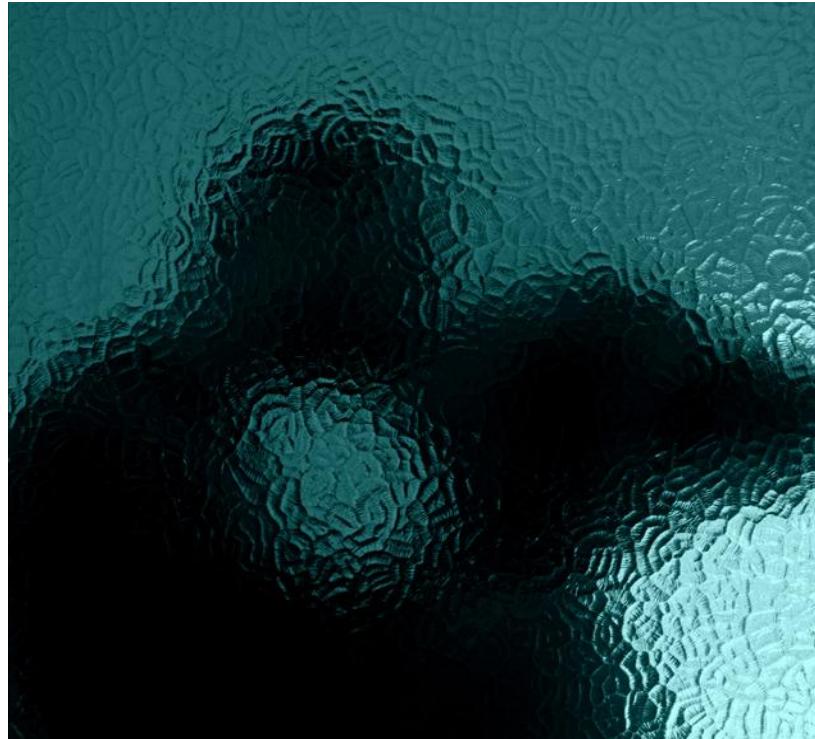
μ' ένα φιλί
που οδηγεί
σε ξέφωτο λαμπρό
παραδεισένιο
της Ήδονής
και της Αγάπης

Eros's and Psyche's
black path
paved
with suffering
black dream
of Morpheus

finds a cure

with a kiss
which leads
in a bright
heavenly
glade
of Hedone
and Love

Photo by Anastasia Michailoglu



This Moment

Jordyn
Fredrick

You're sitting across from me now
Sipping tea as you scroll through pictures on your phone
I want to tell you that you look beautiful
But I know you'll just look away
In embarrassment
And mutter that you're not wearing makeup

Never mind that you always look good
With or without
Insecurities don't go away because you
Or I
Will them to

I wish it was that easy

After supper, you stand at the sink
Washing the dishes as I wipe down the table
Your favorite music blasts from your speaker
Almost too loud, but not quite
Just the way you like it

The setting sun makes your hair glow
And I sneak a glance every chance I get
As I step up next to you
Picking up a towel

You look over at me with a smile
But your mind is elsewhere
A million thoughts running behind your eyes

Essays to write
Plans to make
Bills to pay

You don't know how much
I wish you could allow yourself to stop
And relax

But that's not in your nature
So I lean forward and kiss you
Hoping that your mind slows down
And for just a moment
You can forget

I hope I help make you life easier

I'm laying in bed
Trying to focus on the book in my hands
Even as I hear you out in the hallway
On the phone

It must be your father on the other end
I can tell by the way your voice rises
Sounding upset

I want to get up
Take you in my arms
But I know you like to handle him
On your own

You're strong like that

So, I don't get up
I clutch the book harder
Trying to remember the story
The characters
But it's useless

I don't mean to listen to your conversations
Really, I don't
But the harsh tone of your voice
The tears--
I can't ignore them

So I lay down and press my ear to my pillow
Muffling the sound

Minutes later, you crawl into bed next to me
Letting out a sigh
I turn to face you

You meet my eyes with anger still simmering
In their depths
Reflected the light my lamp behind me
I can still see tears shining in your eyes

I say something funny and
Slowly, reluctantly,
You smile

You scoot closer, wrapping your arms
Around my waist
I hold you tight,
Wishing I could shield you
From

Tragic Love
Everything

Yet, for now, this will have to do

We fall asleep in each other's arms
I think there's no better feeling in the world

And in the morning
As the sun filters through
The curtains
You smile and kiss me

I pull you closer, loving the warmth
Of your body next to mine

I don't want to move
To face the day

We take this moment of peace, together

In the silence of our room
I hear you whisper
Against my shoulder,
"I love you"

My heart thuds
As I draw in a sharp breath

That's the first time
You've ever said those words to me

I force myself to calm down
Squash any joyous reaction
You don't like drama, after all

So I press a kiss to your hair
And close my eyes
I say nothing, for now
Knowing it would only scare you

We lay there for as long as we can
Enjoying this moment
Together

Ashes to Ashes

Lori Green

When midnight blooms, veiled in sweet merlot,
my love lies burning, cloaked in sorrow.
I walk again, a thousand miles,
bleeding ashes on freshly fallen snow.

Arms outstretched, the end of the aisle
and reach for you, so willingly beguiled.
A golden glow lies upon your hair,
hiding a hollow heart, its beauty defiled.

Broken dreams, unanswered prayers,
with years forgot, a hatred shared.
Our ties unknotted, they could not bind
us together, no more a pair.

Cupid has missed the mark, his arrow blind
with hearts in two, no longer intertwined.
Something in blue, frozen in gold.
Aching with loss, our fates resigned.

Fingers splayed, to have and to hold,
only now seeing through the blindfold.
The rose is dying, leave though you must
Ashes to ashes, our vows turn to dust.

Like A Car Crash

Kyra Jean

You never forget people.
I know because I still love you.
Because I'll always love you.
I know because I've spent months trying to convince myself that I'll be better without you.
And even though I know I am,
Even though I feel it,
It hurts to not have you.
It hurts to be without you.
It hurts so much and I want to take it back.
I want to rewind time.
To before we lost each other.
Before our paths steered us in different directions -
You went North
And I went South.
But we were both at fault.
I started to feel like your life was moving without me,
Because it was,
Because you started finding better versions of me in new people.
Because you started filling the space I was meant to occupy with people that fit in better.
I was never full enough for that spot.
And I'll spend my whole life regretting that.
Regretting being sad and miserable and broken,
Regretting not being full enough with love for myself, to be in your life.
You couldn't wait for me to get there.
And I don't blame you.
You outgrew me.
And I grew bitter.
I grew cold, and angry, and resentful.
I burned with rage for months.
Till I was burned out.
Till I could no longer stand being constantly aflame.
Till I was exhausted.
Till there was no more gasoline left in me and I'd turned to ash.
That was when I realised we weren't working anymore.
When I combusted before your very eyes, and you didn't even blink.
My ashes were scattered on the ground and you didn't bother to pick them up.
Because you now had people that wouldn't set on fire with love for you.
And it hurt to realise that.
It hurt to accept that.
We were a car crash-
Furious and blazing,

And destined for destruction.
We didn't see the fork in the road,
The deer in the street,
The wall creeping up on us until it was too late and we were being crushed against it.
It was too late to stop,
And I think neither of us knew how to hit the brakes anyway.
Engulfed in flames,
Surrounded by smoke and shattered mirrors.
We came apart so poetically that I wish I'd written it all down,
From beginning to end,
So we could always come back to read our story.
To read how we hurt each other,
Again and again,
Until one of us finally yielded.
Until I finally said enough.
But it didn't change my love for you.
Even now.
Now that we're apart,
Now that I've gotten on my knees and begged for you to let me go.
It still hasn't changed anything
I still love you the same.
Somehow, that makes everything worse.

A Valentine's Day Letter to Bearded Dragon (An Ode)

I decorate your terrarium for Valentine's Day
with heart-shaped gel stickers
that smell overwhelmingly like plastic.

But do not worry.

They're stuck to the outside of the glass
and for good reason.

Your pink tongue shoots out
from your mouth towards the hearts,
because you think they are food.

I love how the most important thing to you is
food.

I love the way you sprint towards
the doors of your terrarium when I have
the mealworm container in my hands.

I love how excited you get
when you see vegetables.

Most of all,
I love you for everything you have taught me
in the fourth months I've gotten to know you,

You've taught me
to always eat my vegetables;

to shed the skins of my old selves
in order to grow something better in their places
while also paying attention to the skin that gets stuck--
these are the parts of myself worth salvaging;

You've taught me
to shake my head at what is wrong
and to wave off those who make me feel
unsafe & uncomfortable;

to assert my boundaries with dignity
(and a little bit of flair);

You've taught me to wear my emotions

etter To My nd My Best Friend)

just as they are, proud &
in the same fashion
you wear your scales
in their burnt orange glory;

You've taught me
to accept that not everyone
feels or loves the same way I do
(and that it's okay).

You are, after all, a reptile
with an underdeveloped hypothalamus
and are therefore only capable
of expressing the most primitive emotions.

You neither love me nor hate me
just like many people
will neither love me nor hate me,
thus making my pursuits for validation
irrelevant.

You've taught me
that sometimes, being irrelevant is a grand relief
because the burden of expectation
doesn't weigh as heavily on my anxious mind.

It's a strange feeling
but the fact that you
are incapable of loving me
makes me love you even more.

Because you, my Valentine,
have taught me what it means
to be a true reptilian.

Jade Bartlett

Mind As Well

Wanda Tse

Rain comes down in sheets,
folding on itself as it hits the pavement

your footsteps are a scattering of dominoes
against the glossy floors of Union Station

You are late
You spent a lot to get here
and the place is close enough to walk
mind as well

You almost bring your dripping coat and umbrella upstairs not realizing the coat check woman was smiling at you

the hotel elevator
smells of flowers and expectations
tell yourself to act like you belong
chastise your shaking heart
try to have fun
mind as well

He waves you over
introduces you
names and faces you won't remember
You watch him as He drinks an old-fashioned
wonder if there's sweetness in its burning
like the flush in your face as He offers you a sip
mind as well

servers balance disks of champagne glasses
You grasp their elegant necks, kiss their fragile rims all through the night
the room never gets louder than a hum
even though the only voice you hear is His
You still lean in every time you talk to him
your public private conversations
who cares what they think
mind as well

the crowd thins like the night
You wish He had more time
You wish He had more than these tiny pockets of space for you
You reluctantly tell him
You need to catch the train
He says he'll walk you to the station
mind as well leave this party

through the cold
You worry He feels the heat of your proximity
but wishes He tastes it like whiskey

"the train will be here soon. you mind as well leave"

"you mean 'might as well'?"

You stop

and laugh
laugh at yourself
 awkwardly, uncontrollably
at how you've gotten it wrong your entire life

the train pulls into the station
You wrap your arms around his shoulders
pull him in
 hold him longer than you should
his hands on the small of your back give you pause
because He doesn't take them off

the door beckons You
to leave this, but You need
might as well

P U

A collection of tragic loves.